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White House digs in on border wall demand, risking shutdown

By HOPE YEN

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Sunday pushed the federal government closer to the brink of a partial shutdown later this week, digging in on its demand for \$5 billion to build a border wall as congressional Democrats stood firm against it.

"We will do whatever is necessary to build the border wall to stop this ongoing crisis of immigration," said White House senior adviser Stephen Miller.

Asked if that meant having a government shutdown, he said: "If it comes to it, absolutely."

Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a \$5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. But the president doesn't have the votes from the Republican-controlled Congress to support funding for the wall at that level.

Democratic congressional leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, have proposed no more than \$1.6 billion, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill.

Continued on Page 3



In this Dec. 11, 2018, file photo, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press











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Giuliani: 'Over my dead body' will Mueller interview Trump

By JONATHAN LEMIRE **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a number of probes moving closer to the Oval Office, President Donald Trump and his attorney unleased a fresh series of attacks Sunday on the investigators, questioning their integrity while categorically ruling out the possibility of a presidential interview with the special counsel.

Trump and Rudy Giuliani used Twitter and television interviews to deliver a series of broadsides against special counsel Robert Mueller and federal prosecutors in New York. Giuliani said he was "disgusted" by the tactics used by Mueller in his probe into Russian election interference, including in securing guilty pleas from the president's former national security adviser Michael Flynn on a charge of lying to federal investiga-

Trump, Giuliani said, would not submit to an interview by Mueller's team.

"They're a joke," Giuliani told "Fox News Sunday." "Over my dead body, but, you know, I could be dead."

The special counsel, who investigating possible ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, has continued to request an interview with the president. Last month, the White House sent written answers in response to the special counsel's questions about possible collusion. White House has resisted answering questions on possible obstruction of justice.

Giuliani sarcastically said that the only thing left to ask the president was about "several unpaid parking tickets that night, back in 1986, '87 that haven't been explained."

If the president officially re-



In this May 5, 2018, file photo, Rudy Giuliani, an attorney for President Donald Trump, speaks at the Iran Freedom Convention for Human Rights and democracy in Washington. Giuliani is categorically ruling out the possibility of a presidential interview with special counsel Robert Mueller.

Associated Press

fuses an interview request, the special counsel's team could theoretically seek to subpoena him to compel his testimony. Such a move would almost certainly trigger an immediate court

The Supreme Court has never directly ruled on whether a president can be subpoenaed for testimony in a criminal investigation, though the justices have said that a president can be forced to turn over records that have been subpoenaed and can be forced to answer questions as part of a lawsuit.

The special counsel's investigation has spun out charges and strong-armed guilty pleas from Trump underlings while keeping in suspense whether the president — "Individual-1" in Mueller's coded legalese - will end up accused of criminal behavior himself. This past week, his legal exposure grew as his former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, was sentenced to three years in prison af- It was not a break-in. The

hush-money payments to women who alleged sexual trysts with Trump. Prosecutors and Cohen say he acted at the president's direction, which Trump and Giuliani deny.

Trump and Giuliani have repeatedly tried to paint Cohen as untrustworthy, with the former New York City mayor calling him a "pathological liar."

"Which is the truth?" Giuliani said of the competing stories from Trump and Cohen. "I think I know what the truth is. Unless you're God, you'll never know what the truth is."

Trump and Giuliani have also accused prosecutors of intimidating the president's associates into making false claims.

"Remember, Michael Coafter the FBI did something which was absolutely unthinkable & unheard of until the Witch Hunt was illegally started," Trump tweeted. "They BROKE INTO AN AT-TORNEY'S OFFICE!"

ter admitting he issued FBI executed a search war-

in conducting a raid in April on Cohen's home, office and hotel room and seizing records on a variety of matters, among them a \$130,000 payment made to porn actress Stormy Daniels by Cohen. The application for the warrant was approved high in the Justice Department.

In response to Trump's tweet, former FBI Director James Comey tweeted, "This is from the President of our country, lying about the lawful execution of a search warrant issued by a federal judge. Shame on Republicans who don't speak up at this moment for the FBL the rule of law. and the truth.

Prosecutors have said Trump directed Cohen to arrange the payments to buy the silence of Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal in the run-up to the 2016 campaign. Federal prosecutors in New York say the payments amounted to illegal campaign contributions because they were made at the height of election season to keep voters from learning of Trump's alleged infidelities.

Giuliani has argued the payments were made to protect Trump's family, not to influence the election.

"If there's another purpose,

it's not a campaign contribution," Giuliani told ABC. "Suppose he tried to use campaign funds to pay Stormy Daniels. It wouldn't be illegal. These are not hen only became a 'Rat' campaign contributions." The hush money wasn't initially reported on campaign finance documents and, in any case, far exceeded the legally acceptable amount for inkind contributions. The fed-

eral limit on individual con-

tributions is \$2,700.

rant obtained from a judge Cohen also pleaded guilty to lying to investigators about the Trump Organization's goals to build a tower in Moscow. His representative, Lanny Davis, told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday that his written statement to Congress, which contained the lie, was published ahead of his testimony and Cohen then spoke to the White House.

> "Not one person from the White House ever said, 'Don't lie,'" Davis said.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, the top Democrat on the House oversight committee and the likely chairman come January, said he wanted Cohen to testify before Congress about what he told prosecutors. Meanwhile, Trump's fellow Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, acknowledged on CNN that "it was not a good week for President Trump" and urged "that the special counsel be allowed to complete his investigation unimpeded." Trump compared his situation to one involving President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign. The Federal Election Commission docked the Obama campaign \$375,000 for regulatory civil violations. The fines stemmed from the campaign's failure to report a batch of contributions, totaling nearly \$1.9 million, on time in the final days of the campaign.

But legal analysts said the accusations against Trump could amount to a felony because they revolve around an alleged conspiracy to conceal payments from campaign contribution reports — and from voters. It's unclear what federal prosecutors in New York will decide to do if they conclude that there is evidence that Trump himself committed a crime.

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SHUTDOWN

Continued from Front

The money would not go for the wall but for fencing upgrades and other border security. Democrats also offered to simply keep funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion.

Showing no signs of budging, Schumer said Sunday that it was up to Trump to decide whether parts of the federal government shut down at midnight Friday over his border wall, sending thousands of federal employees home without pay during the holidays.

About one-quarter of the government would be affected, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks.

"He is not going to get the wall in any form," Schumer

Both parties in Congress have suggested that Trump would likely need to make the next move to resolve the impasse. The House is taking an extended weekend break, returning Wednesday night. The Senate returns Monday after a three-day absence.

Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' proposal as of Friday, according to the Democrats, telling them he would take a look. Trump will need Democratic votes either way, now or in the new year, for passage.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, said Republicans remain hopeful they can come up with a proposal that can be acceptable to Trump and pass both chambers. He

suggested that could take the form of a stopgap bill that extends funding until January, or a longer-term bill that includes money for border security.

"There are a lot of things you need to do with border security," he said. "One is a physical barrier but also the technology, the manpower, the enforcement, all of those things, and our current laws are in some ways an incentive for people to come to this country illegally, and they go through great risk and possibly great harm."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, urged senators to revisit a bill she helped push earlier this year that would provide \$2.5 billion for border security, including physical barriers as well as technology and border patrol agents.

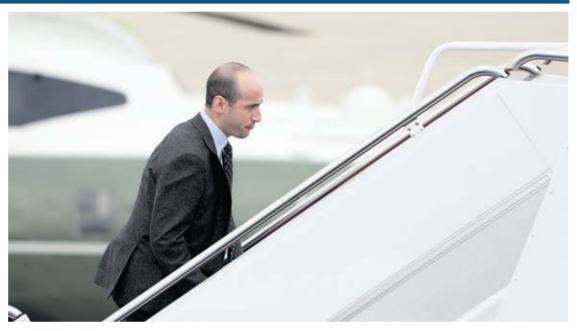
Schumer declined to say whether Democrats would be willing to consider proposals other than the two options that he and Pelosi offered.

Republicans "should join us in one of these two proposals, which would get more than enough votes passed and avoid a shutdown," Schumer said. "Then, if the president wants to debate the wall next year, he can. I don't think he'll get it. But he shouldn't use innocent workers as hostage for his temper tantrum."

will need Democratic votes either way, now or in the new year, for passage.

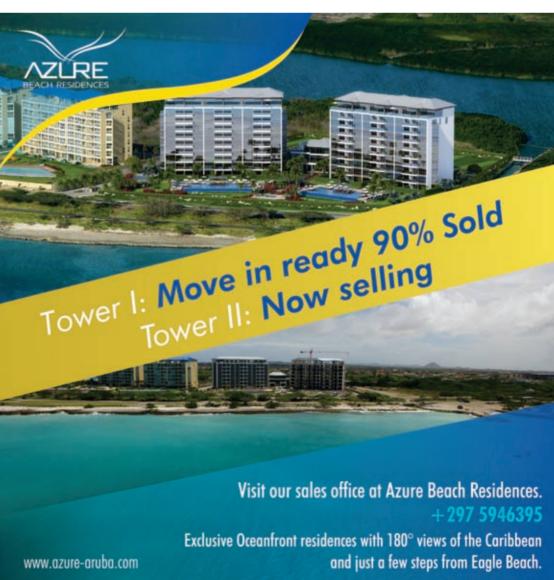
Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation," Schumer appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," and Collins was on ABC's "This can in the Senate, said Re-





In this Nov. 2, 2018, file photo, President Donald Trump's White House Senior Adviser Stephen Miller boards Air Force One for campaign rallies in West Virginia and Indiana, in Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

Associated Press





O'Rourke, other Dems don't want tent city's contract renewed

By WILL WEISSERT **Associated Press**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Rep. Beto O'Rourke and four other Democratic members of Congress toured a remote tent city in West Texas on Saturday where they said that 2,700 immigrant teens are being held at a cost of roughly \$1 million per day. The lawmakers urged the nonprofit running the facility not to renew a federal contract that expires Dec. 31, a longshot request that could effectively shutter the camp. It was supposed to be temporary but has instead taken in more children and taken on a permanent feel with soccer fields, a dining facility and tents housing separate sleeping quarters for boys and girls.



U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-El Paso, second from left, speaks with four other Democratic members of Congress after touring the Tornillo international port of entry where several thousand immigrant teens are being housed Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018, east of El Paso, Texas. With him are from left, Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-HI, Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon and Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif.

Associated Press

potential 2020 presiden- Ted Cruz in his deep-red

O'Rourke — a Texan who tial candidate after nearly has been mentioned as a upsetting Republican Sen.

Sens. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Tina Smith of Minnesota, and California Rep. Judy Chu.

O'Rourke said he and his colleagues weren't allowed to speak to the children in any meaningful way.

"They kind of nodded their heads, but what are they going to say when everyone around them is watching?" O'Rourke said after touring the facility. "But there was something in the look on their faces that we saw, the way that they weren't really engaged in the sports that they were playing out on those fields." "We need to shut it down," Chu added. "It is inhumane. It is a child prison. It has no right to exist."

O'Rourke made no mention about his possible White House aspirations after making his fourth visit to the camp just outside Tornillo. He noted the area was about an hour's drive from his native El Paso, which borders Mexico at the westernmost tip of Texas."It's in a remote location on purpose so that the American people do not know what's happening here," O'Rourke told reporters.

The lawmakers said 2,700 boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 17 were being held at Tornillo. They described touring the tents housing the teens, but could only ask light questions. O'Rourke said he asked a few of them what countries they were from — Guatemala and Honduras, assurances that the conditions were "OK."

Tornillo opened as a temporary facility in June, amid what President Donald Trump's administration described as an emergency situation on the U.S.-Mexi-

state — was joined by U.S. co border. Since then, the contract keeping it open has been renewed, and the numbers of kids being held inside has grown, though determining how fast and by how much has proven difficult.

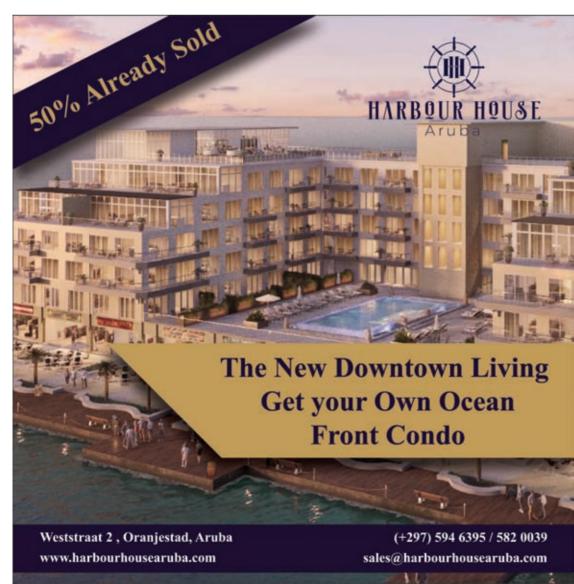
> The lawmakers said the contractor running the facility, BCFS Health and Human Services, told them that the tent city has cost taxpayers \$144 million since opening, or about \$1 million a day.

> The Democrats said they urged BCFS Health and Human Services to refuse to renew its contract with the U.S. government. But even if that happened, the lawmakers said they weren't sure where the children being held at Tornillo would be transferred as a result.

> The Associated Press previously reported administra-Trump tion waved FBI fingerprint checks for caregivers and short-staffing mental health workers at Tornillo.

> O'Rourke said Saturday that the contractor told him that a recent agreement with Texas now allows for state background checks, but that the facility still doesn't have the capacity to do FBI fingerprint checks.

The lawmakers said many of the teens have family already in the United States who would like to take them. But federal authorities have begun fingerprinting and conducting background checks on wouldbe "sponsors," resulting in 170 apprehensions on posthey said — and received sible immigration violations. They also said that even with the added scrutiny, the contractor said 1,300 children have relatives ready to take them but have remained at Tornillo due to unexplained federal delays.





Family of migrant girl disputes official story on her death

By The Associated Press The family of a 7-year-old Guatemalan girl who died in U.S. Border Patrol custody is disputing an account from U.S. officials who said she had not been given food or water for days.

In a statement released by lawyers, the parents of Jakelin Caal said the girl had been given food and water and appeared to be in good health as she traveled through Mexico with her father, 29-year-old Nery Gilberto Caal Cuz. The family added that Jakelin had not been traveling through the desert for days before she was taken into custody.

Tekandi Paniagua, the Guatemalan consul in Del Rio, Texas, told The Associated Press that he spoke with the Jakelin's father. The consul said Nerv Caal told him the group they were traveling with was dropped off in Mexico about a 90-minute walk from the border.

Border Patrol officials did not immediately respond to the family's comments.

The family's statement was released Saturday during a news conference in El Paso, Texas, at an immigrant shelter where Jakelin's father is staying. Her family did not attend and has asked for privacy.

Jakelin and her father were seeking asylum in the U.S. and were among a large group of migrants arrested Dec. 6 near a remote border crossing in New Mexi-CO

Hours later they were placed on a bus to the nearest Border Patrol station, but Jakelin began vomiting and eventually stopped breathing.

hospital

Border Patrol officials on Friday said agents did everything they could to save the girl but that she had not had food or water for days. They added that an initial screening showed no evidence of health problems, and that her father had



This Jan. 7, 2017 photo, shows the Antelope Wells port of entry from the El Berrendo, Mexico, side of the border with southern New Mexico.

Associated Press

signed a form indicating she was in good health.

But the family took issue with that form, which was in English, a language her father doesn't speak or read. He communicated with border agents in Spanish but he primarily speaks the Mayan Q'eqchi' language. "It is unacceptable for any government agency to have persons in custody sign documents in a language that they clearly do not understand," the statement said.

Jakelin's family is urging authorities to conduct an "objective and thorough" investigation into the death and to determine whether officials met standards for the arrest and custody of children.

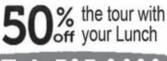
A cause of death has not yet been released. A private prayer service was She later died at a Texas held in Texas on Friday so her father could see Jakelin's body before it is taken to Guatemala, said Ruben Garcia, director of the Annunciation House shelter where her father is staying. "All of us were moved by the depth of his faith and his trust that God's hand is in all of this," Garcia said.















Higher percentage of California pot passing safety tests

BV MICHAEL R. BLOOD LOS ANGELES (AP) — A higher percentage of California marijuana products are passing strict safety tests, but the sudden closing of a lab that state authorities found wasn't correctly checking for pesticides has raised new questions about the system intended to protect the purity and potency of legal cannabis.

California broadly legalized marijuana at the start of the year, and mandatory testing began in July 1. During the first two months the failure rate was about 20 percent, but state data collected through November showed improvement — about 14 percent of nearly 24,000 products were blocked from store shelves by tests.

Cannabis-infused cookies, candies and tinctures continued having the most trouble in test labs: About 26 percent were rejected, though that also was an improved rate compared to the July-August period, when one-third failed.

"With any news rules, there's always going to be a peri-



In this June 21, 2018, file photo, a laboratory manager demonstrates how she uses an instrument to photograph cannabis samples at an analytical laboratory in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press

od of adjustment that takes place," said Alex Traverso, a spokesman for the state Bureau of Cannabis Control. "The cannabis industry in California adapts pretty quickly, and I think that's what we're seeing with ently since the program these lower fail rates in testing. That's encouraging." The integrity of the testing

program was shaken last month when Sacramentobased Sequoia Analytical Labs surrendered its license after state regulators found it was conducting faulty tests for pesticides, apparkicked off at midyear.

State regulators asked retailers and distributors to recall any batches tested by the company after July 1. Any batches returned by consumers must be destroyed. Products pulled back from a company's inventory can be retested with state permission, or destroyed. But it's likely many of those products already have been consumed.

It wasn't immediately clear how much cannabis was cleared by the lab for sale, but it's almost certainly a large amount, covering five months of testing. The state has issued only a few dozen lab licenses.

State regulators declined to comment on specifics of the case, other than to confirm the company no longer holds a license to test cannabis in the state.

In a statement posted on its website, the company blamed the flawed tests on a faulty instrument that failed to check for 22 of 66 required pesticides. The company said it terminated its lab director who "knew about this and was secretly falsifying the results" since July 1. The company said it is seeking to have its license reinstated.

The lab did not return a phone call or email from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Swetha Kaul, chief scientific officer at Santa Ana-based testing company Cannalysis who sits on the board

of the California Cannabis Industry Association, said there are concerns that some companies might not be getting sufficient oversight from regulators.

At this point, it remains unclear how one company was able to falsify test results for so long.

"We need more labs. We need better labs," she said. "We have bad actors, just like every other section of the industry."

In the high-stakes cannabis market, it's obvious that testing companies — the pathway to the legal market — could be targets for abuse, either from unscrupulous producers eager to pay for favorable results, or labs willing to sweeten results to attract more business

There have been scattered reports of apparent problems. In Washington state in 2017, regulators suspended certification of a pot lab after auditors found an unusually low number of samples had been failed in certain cases. The company never regained certification.

California for months has been reviewing a vast set of regulations that govern the legal market, including setting standards for testing labs. Those revised rules are expected to be finalized early next year, replacing temporary ones that have been guiding businesses since broad legal sales kicked off Jan. 1.

Josh Drayton of the California Cannabis Industry Association said it's an open secret in the industry that companies have been known to pay for favorable test results. He said California needed rigorous rules to keep out shady opera-

"We don't want to create a pay-to-play system with our testing labs," said Drayton, who was unfamiliar with details of the Sequoia case. "We do need to make sure we get standard operating procedures."

The state has been facing pressure to revamp testing requirements that have been alternately described as going too far or not far enough.





U.S. NEWS A7 MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2018



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Tea thrown into harbor for anniversary of **Boston Tea Party**

BOSTON (AP) — Tea will Shawn Ford, executive dionce again be thrown into Boston Harbor to mark the 245th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party.

Sunday is the anniversary of the protest during which colonists protesting taxation without representation threw British tea into Boston Harbor in what is considered a pivotal event that led to the American Revo-

The Old South Meeting House and the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum are organizing the reenactment. It will feature more than 40 crates of loose tea was sent in from across the country to be thrown into the harbor as part of the

Organizers are expecting thousands of spectators at the annual event, which will shut down streets Sunday night in Boston.

rector for the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, said it's important to mark the anniversary because it was the "single most important event that led to the American Revolution."

"Simply put, if the Tea Party didn't happen, we could be British today," he said. "The citizens of Boston stood up and were willing to risk their lives, families, homes and fortunes based on this idea that men of this country should be free from taxation without representation."

He said the destruction of tea in Boston "changed the world."

Harriet Cross, the British consul general to New England, will welcome attendees to celebrate the current relationship between Boston and the United Kingdom.

In this Thursday, Dec. 13, 2018 photo, a discarded beam rests in the driveway of the home where Sarah Clayes lived, in Framingham, Mass., after leaving Salem, Mass., following the 1692 witch

Associated Press

NSIDE & OUTSIDE SEATING - FREE PARKING

For sale: Restored home of Salem witch trials refugee

By MARK PRATT

BOSTON (AP) — A oncerun-down historic home that stands where a woman accused of witchcraft during the 1692 Salem witch trials settled after she was spared the noose is on the market after an extensive renovation project.

The home in Framingham, Massachusetts, known as the Peter and Sarah Clayes House, hit the market Thursday with an asking price of \$975,000. An open house is planned Sunday.

Annie Murphy, executive director of the Framingham History Center and a member of the trust formed to save the structure that had fallen into disrepair, is confident someone who appreciates history will snap up

the property.

"We've already done tours, and I had people coming up to me practically in tears, they were so thrilled we had saved this house," she said.

Sarah Clayes was jailed during the 1692 witch trials, which claimed the lives of 20 people, including her sisters, Rebecca Nurse and Mary Easty. She was freed in 1693 when the hysteria died down.

Sarah and her husband, Peter, along with other members of their extended family, resettled on land about 35 miles (55 kilometers) southwest of Salem that in 1700 became the town of Framingham.

Historians acknowledge that little, if any, of the origi-

nal home built at the site in 1693 remains. The structure still standing dates to 1776. After a foreclosure around 2000, the privately owned home was abandoned and became derelict. It was vandalized and defaced with graffiti.

The trust was created to make renovations that turned out to be way more complicated than anticipated, said Murphy, who herself spent hours scraping paint and pulling weeds to help her contractor husband, Ned, complete the work.

The property includes a 150-year-old American elm, a brook and the ruins of an old mill.

"It's been a labor of love," Murphy said.

Report: Federal Air **Marshal Service** curtailing surveillance

surveillance program that's been accused of spying on thousands of unwitting passengers who are not suspected of a crime or appear on a terror watch list. The agency's new director, David Kohl, tells the Boston Globe that air marshals are

BOSTON (AP) — The Feder- "no longer capturing" any al Air Marshal Service says "routine passenger behavit's curtailing a domestic iors on a plane that would be seen as normal behav-

> Agency officials say marshals no longer document travelers' minor movements and behavior, such as whether they use the restroom during a flight or fidget in the airport.q



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Catalan separatists on hunger strike speak out

By ARITZ PARRA SANT JOAN DE VILATOR-RADA, Spain (AP) — Separatist politicians from Spain's Catalonia region who are entering the third week of a prison hunger strike say their upcoming rebellion trial will give them a platform to peacefully promote the cause of Catalan independence.

In rare interviews conducted inside a prison north of Barcelona, Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Turull repeated their calls for dialogue between Catalonia's regional government and Spanish government authorities in Madrid. Turull has been in a prison medical ward since Friday.

Their trial, set to begin early next year, will be "a unique moment to denounce the attitude of the Kingdom of Spain contrary to the political and democratic rights in Catalonia," Sanchez told The Associated Press.

"We are not going to let this opportunity go to waste," he added.

The pair also rejected depictions of the secessionist movement in the prosperous northeastern region as violent

Sanchez wore three layers of clothing even though the heating in the prison managed by Catalan government was working. The chill he feels results from not consuming calories, according to Sanchez's doctor, who said the 54 yearold has lost more than 5 kilograms (11 pounds) since he began fasting on Dec. 1.

Spain says the 22 defendants in the case are being prosecuted not for their ideas but for defying



In this undated photo provided by Catalan language association, showing jailed Catalan separatist leaders posing for a photo inside Lledoners jail in Sant Joan de Vilatorrada, Spain, with left to right; Jordi Sanchez, Oriol Junqueras, Jordi Turull, Joaquim Forn, Jordi Cuixart, Josep Rull and Raul Romeva.

Associated Press

court orders by holding a independence banned referendum in October 2017 and making an illegal attempt to secede.

Some of them have been indicted on charges of rebellion or sedition and face decades in prison in what local media have dubbed "the trial of the century" in Spain's Supreme Court. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, although the defendants are not expected to appear in court until weeks later.

Cabinet members joined the hunger strike Dec. 3, but other inmates from a competing separatist political group, including former Catalan Vice President Oriol Junqueras, have chosen not to participate, exposing different approaches within the independence

movement.

Catalonia's banned independence, Spain's violent crackdown to stop it and a subsequent declaration of independence by Catalan authorities led to an unprecedented sevenmonth takeover by central authorities of the region of 7.4 million people.

More than a year later, the shockwaves are still being felt across Spain. A political divide is growing between Catalan and Spanish nationalism, a development Two more former Catalan that has fueled the momentum of a far-right populist party that recently won a dozen seats in Andalusia's regional parliament.

> Turull, a former candidate to become the region's president, was sent to the Lledoners prison infirmary Friday because his kidneys have been affected after

he shed over 13 pounds in two weeks. He said he tricks his body to ignore hunger with nicotine.

Turull said his protest comes with "a sense of responsibility" and he is not looking to starve to death.

"Its end depends on how far our strength takes us and on achieving our goal of calling attention to Spain's judicial problem," the 52-year-old lawyer said. Their aim is to press Spain's Constitutional Court to rule on appeals about their political rights and their prolonged pre-trial jailing. The strikers think the court is deliberately trying to block them from reaching the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, where they hope to expose the judicial flaws they see at

The Spanish top court has

recently begun to issue some rulings in a series of appeals and says that it's working as fast as the judicial calendar allows it to in "dealing with the complexity of a case that affects fundamental rights and a careful analysis of criminal law." Central Spanish authorities see no reason for the hunger strike.

"Their arguments are false. They will have a fair trial because in Spain the judiciary is independent," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said recently, adding that his government rejects both taking politics to court and "politicizing justice."

Although Spain's system of appointing top justices and prosecutors has been questioned inside and outside Spain, those who think it's working list the numerous sentences against the country's political and economic elite. One such ruling earlier this year led to Mariano Rajoy's ousting as prime minister and brought Sanchez to power.

Sanchez, a Socialist, has tried a conciliatory tone, but his approach has not reduced tensions with the Catalan separatists. Hardening rhetoric against the nationalists has spread across Spain's political spectrum and coincided with the ascent of Vox, a far-right party.

Turull, a longtime secessionist, says Spain's far right is dragging other parties to its extremism and becoming "a machine of generating tensions" in Catalonia. He also says Sanchez should consider dialogue more than ever, including on the underlying issue of Catalan self-determination.



WORLD NEWS A9 MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2018

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Talks adopt 'rulebook' to put Paris climate deal into action

By FRANK JORDANS **Associated Press** KATOWICE, Poland (AP)

- Almost 200 nations, including the world's top greenhouse gas producers, China and the United States, have adopted a set of rules meant to breathe life into the 2015 Paris climate accord by setting out how countries should report their emissions and efforts to reduce them.

But negotiators delayed other key decisions until next year — a move that frustrated environmentalists and countries that wanted more ambitious goals in light of scientists' warnings that the world must shift sharply away from fossil fuels in the coming decade. "The majority of the rulebook for the Paris agreement has been created, which is something to be thankful for," said Mohamed Adow, a climate policy expert at Christian Aid. "But the fact countries had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the finish line shows that some nations have not woken up" to the dire consequences of global warming as outlined in a report by the U.N Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.

Officials at the talks, which ended late Saturday in the Polish city of Katowice, agreed upon universal cut emissions. Poor countries secured assurances on financial support to help them reduce emissions, adapt to changes such as rising sea levels and pay for damage that has already happened.



Heads of the delegations react at the end of the final session of the COP24 summit on climate change in Katowice, Poland, Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018.

Associated Press

"Through this package, you have made a thousand little steps forward together," said Michal Kurtyka, a senior Polish official who led the talks.

While each country would likely find some parts of the agreement it did not like, he said, efforts were made to balance the interests of all parties.

"We will all have to give in order to gain," he said. "We will all have to be courageous to look into the future and make yet another step for the sake of human-

The talks took place against rules on how nations can a backdrop of growing concern among scientists that global warming is proceeding faster than governments are responding to it. Last month, a study found that global warming will worsen disasters such as the deadly California wildfires and the powerful hurricanes that have hit the United States this year.

The recent report by the IPCC concluded that while it's possible to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century compared to preindustrial times, doing so would require a dramatic overhaul of the global economy, including a shift away from fossil fuels.

Alarmed by efforts to include that idea in the final text of the meeting, the oil-exporting nations of the U.S., Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait blocked an endorsement of the IPCC report midway through this month's talks. That prompted uproar from vulnerable countries like small island nations and environmental groups.

The final text omitted a pre-

vious reference to specific reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and merely welcomed "timely completion" of the IPCC report, not its conclu-

Johan Rockstrom, a scientist who helps to lead the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, called the agreement "a relief." The Paris deal, he said, "is alive and kicking, despite a rise in populism and nationalism."

His biggest concern, he said, is that the summit "failed to align ambitions with science, in particular missing the necessity of making clear that global emissions from fossil fuels must be cut by half by 2030" to stay in line with the IPCC report.

Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the talks created "a solid foundation for implementation and strengthening" of the Paris agreement and could help bring the U.S. back into the deal by a future presidential administration.

One major sticking point was how to create a functioning market in carbon credits. Economists believe that an international trading system could be an effective way to drive down areenhouse gas emissions and raise large amounts of money for measures to curb global warming.

But Brazil wanted to keep the piles of carbon credits it had amassed under an old system that developed countries say wasn't credible or transparent.

Among those that pushed back hardest was the United States, despite President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord and his promotion of coal as a source of energy

"Overall, the U.S. role here has been somewhat schizophrenic — pushing coal and dissing science on the one hand, but also working hard in the room for strong transparency rules," said Elliot Diringer of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, a Washington think tank.

When it came to closing potential loopholes that could allow countries to dodge their commitments to cut emissions, "the U.S. pushed harder than nearly anyone else for transparency rules that put all countries under the same system, and it's largely succeeded."



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Hungary sees 4th day of protests over overtime, other issues

By KESTER EDDY **Associated Press**

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) -Several thousand protesters marched through Budapest for a fourth day to oppose laws promoted by the Hungarian government that critics say will restrict workers' rights and have undermined democracy.

The protesters chanted anti-government slogans and braved sub-zero temperatures Sunday while gathered in front of parliament, where speakers denounced revised overtime rules that lawmakers approved Wednesday.

The crowd became increasingly angry as speakers called for the demonstrations to remain dignified and peaceful, chanting "We've had enough!" and



Vice-chairperson of Momentum party Anna Donath holds up a smoke grenade during an anti-government protest in the downtown of Budapest, Hungary, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.

Associated Press

"Strike, strike, strike!" Perhaps as a result, the event's final speaker was more defiant. Anna Donath, the daughter of an

outspoken minister, lit a

"We will not tire. We won't go home. Today we are twice as much as yesterday. We are (growing) day by day. This is a mass community."

Police detained Donath on

Thursday for lighting a flare court for administrative during a protest.

The labor code amendments that sparked the protests increase the maximum number of overtime hours that companies can demand from workers in a year from 250 to 400. The changes, intended to offset Hungary's growing labor shortage, also give employers up to three years instead of 12 months to settle payments of accrued over-

Since the first protest on Wednesday night and others held Thursday and Friday, the demonstrations have evolved to encompass other policies of Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government, including another passed Wednesday that establishes a separate

matters.

A government spokesman, asked to comment on Sunday's demonstration, said in an email that citizens had a constitutional right to assemble freely as long as laws weren't broken in the process.

On Thursday, some protesters threw bottles and smoke bombs at officers in riot gear guarding the neo-Gothic parliament building. Police said two officers were injured.

The demonstrations have attracted disparate participants from across Hungary's political spectrum. They include members of Jobbik, which started out as a radical right movement and has worked to reframe itself as a "peoples" party.



Kremlin candidate wins Far East governorship in repeat vote

By MATTHEW BODNER **Associated Press**

MOSCOW (AP) — Russians living in the far eastern region of Primorsky Krai elected a Kremlin-backed candidate for governor Sunday after the results from a previous election were thrown out due to alleged voting fraud.

Local election officials said the acting governor of the region, Oleg Kozhemyako, won 61.8 percent of the votes after more than 99 percent of the ballots had been counted in the Russian region on the Sea of

The election commission said Andrei Andreichenko of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party came in second with 25.2 percent of the vote.

Russian Prime Minister Dmi-

try Medvedev called Kozhemyako to congratulate him on the victory.

President Vladimir Putin tapped Kozhemyako to stand in as governor of Primorsky Krai and run in the election in place of the former acting governor. Andrei Tarasenko.

Tarasenko, who represented the ruling United Russia party during a gubernatorial election in September, appeared ready to lose the election to a Communist challenger who had received 98 percent of the vote after nearly half of the ballots were counted. But by the time 99 percent of ballots were tallied, officials declared that Tarasenko had come back to win the election by over 7,500

In the face of growing out-

rage over suspected voting fraud, the Russian Central Election Commission quickly moved to annul the results, claiming they were impossible to verify as both sides accused the other of improprieties.

Tarasenko was not among the four candidates who competed in Sunday's vote.

Andrei Ishchenko, Communist candidate in the September vote election, did not run again, either. His party boycotted Sunday's election and he failed to gather the required signatures for an independent bid for governor.

The election commission reported a 39.6 percent voter turnout for Sunday's election, up from 29.2 percent in September.



WORLD NEWS A11 MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2018



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North Korea marks 7th anniversary of Kim Jong II's death

By ERIC TALMADGE **Associated Press**

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — North Koreans are marking the seventh anniversary of the death of leader Kim Jong II with visits to statues and vows of loyalty to his son and successor, Kim Jong Un.

As snow fell Sunday, tens of thousands of people offered flowers and paid respects to the late leader at Mansu Hill in central Pyongyang, the location of huge bronze statues of the "Dear Leader" and national founder Kim II Sung.

The anniversary observations were expected to continue through Monday across the country.

The death of Kim Jong II on Dec. 17, 2011, thrust his son into power when he was still in his late 20s and a virtual unknown figure outside of the North.

Despite many predictions from outside experts that he wouldn't be up to the task, Kim Jong Un has consolidated his power, bolstered the country's economy in the face of intense international sanctions and



In this April 25, 2002, file photo, then North Korean leader Kim Jong II claps from the balcony as soldiers salute him during a military parade, celebrating the foundation of the armed forces in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Associated Press

attained a goal his father and grandfather could only dream of — he is the first North Korean leader to possess an arsenal of nuclear weapons and longrange missiles capable of reaching the United States. With attention focused on the year. But the North's of-

the anniversary, there was little mention in the state media of the issues that have gotten the most attention elsewhere, including a flurry of speculation in South Korea that Kim might visit Seoul by the end of ficial Korean Central News taphs around the country. Agency ran a lengthy commentary late Sunday that slammed the United States for "slander" and "sheer malice" against the country and for dragging its feet on efforts to improve relations after Kim's summit with President Donald Trump in Singapore in June.

The commentary deliberately focused its criticism on the State Department and administration officials, not at Trump, suggesting that Pyongyang remains open to another summit. Trump has suggested he could meet Kim again early next year.

With Kim's power base seemingly more solid than ever, and his recent effort to establish himself on the world stage through summits with Trump and others, North Korea watchers have been on the lookout for signs that his own personality cult is being bolstered.

Virtually all homes and public offices in North Korea feature portraits of the elder Kims, who are also memorialized in countless statues, mosaics and ceno-

North Korean adults wear pins over their hearts bearing the likenesses of Kim II Sung of Kim Jong II, or both. The North has yet to come out with a Kim Jong Un pin or to order his image join the others on every wall, though Kim and his wife, Ri Sol Ju, have been referred to with increasingly lofty titles — "chairman" for Kim and "respected first lady" for Ri. A special portrait of the young chairman was unveiled recently at a ceremony to welcome the visit of Cuba's president, but none have appeared in public since. And unlike his father and grandfather, Kim's Jan. 8 birthday has yet to be declared a national holiday or even marked on calendars.

None of that should be assumed to be a sign of weakness, however.

Kim is generally afforded the same reverential treatment by the state media, and for maintaining a respectful step behind his predecessors, he is credited with showing humility and confidence.

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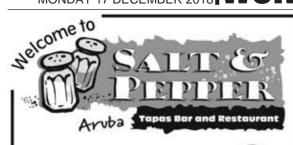
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Exodus from Venezuela leaves families divided across borders

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO **SCOTT SMITH**

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

When Emili Espinoza was finally able to make a video call to the 3-year-old son she hadn't seen since fleeing Venezuela, the little boy named Elvis didn't recognize her.

"No," he told her. "My mom is sleeping."

That cold denial sent a shiver of sadness down her spine. She reminded him of the chocolate-covered bananas she used to buy him, hoping to trigger a memory. But his young mind couldn't grasp the recollection.

His mother wasn't the 28-year-old woman with almond-colored eyes staring at him through a cell phone screen, he insisted, but the young lady who happened to be taking care of him that afternoon and was napping a few feet away.

Like thousands of other Venezuelan migrants what the U.N. calls the largest exodus of people in South America's modern history, Espinoza had made an aqonizing choice six months ago: To leave without her three children. She did not have the money to bring them and had no idea what trials she might face in Colombia. So she left them with her brother in the hopes of earning enough to feed them and, with time, reunite.

It's a pattern that echoes other migrations throughout the world, from Central America, the Caribbean and Asia: Heads of households are fleeing first, with



In this Dec. 11, 2018 photo, Venezuelan migrant Emili Espinoza commutes back home after a day's work at a health food restaurant in Bogota, Colombia.

Associated Press

hopes — sometimes frustrated — that their families can soon join them. The result is a profound alteration of families, with sometimes devastating consequenc-

Co-workers at the health foods restaurant in Bogota where Espinoza cleans tables tried to console her, saying the child was simply confused and likely associated the word "mother" with any one of the female neighbors or relatives in Venezuela now helping take care of him.

"He would consider that usually live with. person his mother and not me," she said, weeping at the memory.

An estimated 2.3 million Venezuelans have fled their nation's hyperinflation, food and medical shortages over the last three years, according to the United

Nations. About 1 million ration is one more." have landed in neighboring Colombia after making long treks by bus and foot . In one survey by Colombian officials, 73 percent of the more than 250,000 migrant families questioned said they had left relatives behind in Venezuela.

Another smaller survey by the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian aid group, found 52 percent of 312 Venezuelans recently arrived in Colombia reported being separated from at least one child they

"The rate of family separation and separation of parents from children is just staggering," said Marianne Menjivar, the IRC's Venezuela and Colombia director. "These are people who have multiple layers of trauma and the child sepa-

Experts who have studied migrant families say the same factors typically drive the decision to flee without children, regardless of country of origin: Uncertainty about the journey, worries about job prospects in a new country and a belief that the separation will only be temporary. A rise in female migration in recent decades has also led to larger numbers of children separated from their moth-

Perhaps nowhere has the isat the U.S.-Mexico border, where families make wrenching decisions over whether to bring children on long treks — often covering hundreds of miles and finally across scorching, isolated deserts. Even families who cross into the U.S.

together often find themselves separated, whether by agents at the border or deportation orders issued years or decades later.

The impact can vary depending on age and length of time apart, said Joanna Dreby, an associate professor of sociology at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Babies and toddlers are at an age where bonding is considered crucial and little is known about the long-term impact of separation. Middle-school aged children, meanwhile, tend to suffer the most adverse consequences. They are old enough to know what's going on, but may not totally understand their parent's rationale in choosing to be apart.

"They may come, as they get older, to understand the rationale," Dreby said. "But it doesn't change the feelings of resentment they grapple with."

Like other migrants, Venezuelan families are likely to try to reunite as quickly as possible, a trend Colombian authorities believe is already happening, which will result in even higher numbers of Venezuelans living abroad. Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo recently estimated that there could sue been more visible than be as many as 4 million Venezuelans in Colombia by 2021. In their survey of about 250,000 Venezuelan migrant families, Colombian officials found an average of just 1.7 people per "family," indicating that most had relatives scattered across borders.





LOCAL







Feeling Sick during vacation?

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PALM BEACH — Feeling sick is a miserable thing during vacation. This is the time of the year you should enjoy and relax, so staying in a hotel room bed with a sunstroke, skin allergy, ear infection or intestinal problems can be a bummer. The best thing to do is to recover as soon as possible, and Dr. Lili Beke of the Aruba Walk-in Clinic, together with Palm Beach Service Pharmacy are a one-stop-shopping solution.

A Walk-In Clinic to Walk To

First of all she is calm, kind and understanding. Personal touch is her trade mark and with more than 35 years of experience as a medical doctor she knows what's going on. Doctor Beke is located in Palm Beach, at the door steps of the hotel area and her clinic is appropriately named the Aruba Walk-In Clinic. "I'd like to put myself in the shoes of the visitor. Being in a strange place, sometimes far from family or even alone and feeling sick. You can feel lost and disorientated. I can understand that and try to give them comprehension and a welcome feeling while examining them. So they leave with a smile, even if they feel a bit sick." The doctor speaks seven languages: English, Dutch, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Papiamento, meaning she can attend to almost any tourist from all over the world. "You can come in without an appointment and we have an emergency number that works 24/7, if necessary I will visit the patient where he/she is staying. We attend patients every day!" Her philosophy is as follows: As long as you enjoy what you are doing and like to help people, this profession is very rewarding." It sounds like the perfect place to heal.

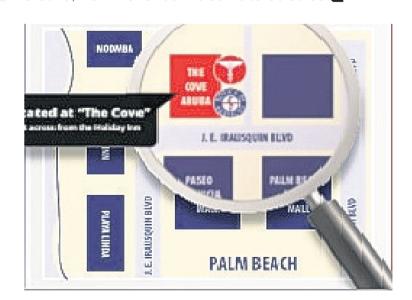
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of 5 pharmacies, points out that convenience is not their only unique asset. "We carry a wide variety of medicines from the US, but most of the medicines come from the EU. The prices in the EU are considerately lower than in the U.S." All medicine are European registered with the same standard as U.S. products. "The law in the States allows visitors to get medicines here for the use of six months and many repeated guests or time share owners do so. This saves them a lot of money. It is however mandatory to have a prescription from a local doctor", says van der Poel. Most common medicines requested by visitors are antibiotic, pain killers and anti-allergy medications.

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The Jolly Pirates crew encourages all snorkelers, regardless of their swimming ability to wear a proper flotation device in the water. Aruba's

clear waters afford snorkelers incredible visibility. Colorful schools of fish dart in and out of the flora and fauna in the shallow reef areas along the coastline. With a bit of practice, you will soon swim confidently among marine life, which call Malmok their home.

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Troubled Teens win Awards with Poems and Art



SAVANETA — "I won, I won", sounded the happy respond from one of the teens of the Ortho-pedagogical Center (OC) who gained an award with her writing for a contest. The contest is a project organized by Merveline Geerman and her husband Mike for troubled teens between 12 and 18 years old. "These children have been through a lot, they are abused, traumatized and in their adolescent phase as well. They are judged upon and receive a lot of negativity within community. Who would not be troubled by a past like that? But the only thing they lacked is love and a safe home." Saturday evening Geerman opened her home to them, to give them love and attention.

Merveline and her husband are caretakers, they

have a heart for voluntary work and they feel like helping and reaching out to those in need. "On the island there is a culture of judgement and punishment. 'Bad children' must be punished is often heard in the community. People are many times harsh and I would like to turn this cold into warmth towards these children, by showing the public their background and story. To bring awareness that this is not their choice." The couple has three children of their own and Merveline says: "When I look at my children and the children of the institute I see two basic elements the latter lack: love and a home with peace and rest. On the island social cohesion fell apart, everybody is too busy with jobs and people do not take care of each other no more."



The Contest

The assessment was for each teen to decorate a book and write about their life and experiences. The end results were exposed for the first time at the Aruba Art Fair in San Nicolas last October. The exposition attracted a wide audience and many people shared their emotions upon the topic. After the Art Fair the books were exposited at several Community Centers. The public was invited to vote for the best writing and the best decoration. Merveline: "The decoration was the easy part, the writing caused some resistance but in the end it was actually helping them." The stories, poems and quotes are very touching and well-written in many cases. There is no change one will not be moved by reading the cries from the heart, but also the dreams and wish-







ba Today about her life: "I

lived in the Dominican Re-

public but things went very

bad, I was beaten up many

times. My mother was here

in Aruba and she came get

me, the only thing is that

she could not give me the

love I needed. A teacher at

school initiated my process

to go live at the OC." She

feels more in peace now,

though in the beginning

she felt she was imprisoned.

"I see things more positive

now and feel I can make

that change. Her dream is

to go to Hollywood and be-

come famous. "Beyonce

and Jennifer Lopez are my role models, they also started off from scratch."

To Give a Voice 700 votes came from the community centers (MFA's) Savaneta, St. Cruz, Paradera and Noord. Merveline: "But there were many more visitors. Not all people wanted to vote because they were overwhelmed with the pain of the children written down. The response from the audience was very good, they were happy with the attention for these children." Her next project she would like to work with young drug addicts. "It is important to give a voice to those who never get to speak out."





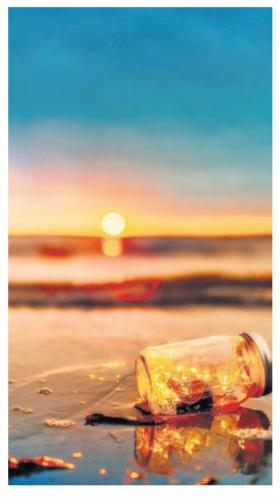


Column by: Shanella Pantophlet

`Tis the season

It's coming up to the end of the year and with that comes high season, for the next five to six months all hotels on the Island will be 95-100% full. It's a rather stressful time for us, because besides the hotel being completely full, there's also various holidays between December and April, which means shorter work weeks.

Of course a shorter week in theory is great, you have days off without having to take any extra vacation days. However that comes at the cost of productivity, with having a three day work week you have to find a to do everything you normally do in five-six days in those three days. It means coming in to work at least an hour earlier to try and get ahead of everything you're supposed to be doing. I find the days between holidays to be some of my most productive because I am squeezing as much as I can out of every last minute of my days. I know that when I leave the office for the long holiday weekend, my work is complete and the departments that depend on me have their necessary information to run smoothly. I can breathe easily, because I work in a timeshare which means the majority of our guests will be in the same rooms or moving rooms on the weekend and there's less check ins. Timeshares have a level of security we can count on during peak season which I'm sure everyone in reservations is happy for as it means we can relax just a tiny bit.





We are all still very much on call though because if there's one thing we know, is that you've got to expect the unexpected even when you think you've accounted for everything that could possibly happen. There's been at least two occasions where I've been called minutes to 12am on New Year's eve because of issues with a check in. Instantly you go from celebrating to business mode to figure out what needs to be done from home to make sure the guests are settled in and happy and can enjoy their own celebrations. Once we managed to figure things out, I still had enough time to get back to celebrating and lighting fireworks to usher in the fireworks, the guests were happy to be in Aruba and settled into their home away from home.

The last thing we want to have happen is a guest being inconvenienced because we are in a rushing around trying to get things done for the holiday weekend. As stressed out as we may be the best thing to do is come in a bit early use the quiet to our advantage and take our time in processing and disseminating all necessary reservation information. In times like these it's always better to measure twice and cut once. So as this holiday season begins, we will continue to work towards making sure our guests can rest assured in knowing that the service they expect won't suffer just because we work less days in the week.



Aruban born and bred Shanella Pantophlet is passionate about tourism. That is the world she studied and works in, so we might as well call her a specialist. Luckily for Aruba Today Shanella also loves to write. And together with the fact that the majority of our readers are tourists, we found ourselves a perfect combination for a column: Hotel Hustle.



SPORTS







AP source: Mets sign C Wilson Ramos to 2-year deal

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Mets have agreed to a \$19.5 million, two-year contract with free agent catcher Wilson Ramos, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

The deal likely signals an end to the Mets' pursuit of Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto. Instead, New York will turn to a two-time All-Star in Ramos who is coming off a strong year with the Tampa Bay Rays and Philadelphia Phillies. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday because the deal has not been announced and is still pending a physical.

The 31-year-old Ramos batted .306 with 15 home runs and an .845 OPS last season, ranking fifth among catchers in Wins Above Replacement at 2.4, via Fangraphs. New York officials met last week with Ramos at the winter meetings in Las Vegas and with Yasmani Grandal, another free agent catcher, in Arizona. Ramos became the priority for the Mets, partly because of compensation required for signing Grandal, who turned down a \$17.9 million qualifying offer from the Los Angeles Dodgers. If New York had signed Grandal, the Mets would have forfeited their second-highest pick in next June's amateur draft and \$500,000 of international signing bonus allocation in 2019-20.

The Mets also discussed a possible trade for Realmuto but decided the players it would have had to give up in a trade were too high a cost.

Continued on Page 22



Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback Joe Haden (23) intercepts a pass intended for New England Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman (11) during the second half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.



U.S. coach: Vonn plans to return to racing next month

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

SELVA DI VAL GARDENA, Italy (AP) — Lindsey Vonn is hoping to return from injury next month and resume her pursuit of the all-time World Cup wins record, according to the U.S. Ski Team's head coach.

"That's what we're hopeful for. That's the plan," Paul Kristofic told The Associated Press on Sunday.

Vonn hyperextended and sprained a ligament in her knee during a training crash on Nov. 19. She also suffered a bone bruise in the crash, in which she fell on a turn, did the splits and went into the protective fence.

January would be an opportune time for Vonn to return, since there are three consecutive weekends of speed races, downhill and super-G — which are Vonn's specialties.

The series opens Jan. 12-13 in St. Anton, Austria, followed by stops in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, and Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

A win or two in that stretch would move Vonn closer to the mark of 86 victories set by Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark.

Vonn has 82 wins.

However, Vonn has not returned to on-snow training yet.

"She's just doing rehab and strength and conditioning," Kristofic said, adding that there is no precise date set for her return to ski training. "It really depends on how things go when she's not on snow. It's sort of day by day."

The 34-year-old Vonn was planning to retire at the end of this season but the injury prompted her to announce recently that she plans to come back for one more series of speed races in Lake Louise, Alberta, next season.

Kristofic said Vonn is also expected to compete in one more final major event — the world championships in Are, Sweden, in February. "It's in the plans to do it," he said.

Meanwhile, Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia



In this Feb. 4, 2018, file photo, United States' Lindsey Vonn celebrates on the podium after winning an alpine ski, women's world Cup downhill race, in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany.

Associated Press

is also hoping to return from injury in January.

Goggia broke a bone in her right ankle during a fall in giant slalom training in Hintertux, Austria, in October.

"She has a doctor's appointment on or about Dec. 21 and hopefully she'll be cleared for on-snow training before the end of this month," Italy coach Giovanni Feltrin said.

"The idea is for her to return in January," Feltrin added. "The exact date I don't know but it would be great if it's in Cortina."

Both Goggia and Vonn won downhills in Cortina last season.

Mikaela Shiffrin will also be missing from speed races Tuesday and Wednesday in Val Gardena. The overall World Cup leader is resting after winning her last three races and with a big set of events coming up in her specialties of slalom and giant slalom.

"I won't be racing as my team and I needed a rest and reboot after the busy last six weeks," Shiffrin wrote on social media Sunday.

The next downhill on Shiffrin's schedule is in Cortina on Jan. 19, Kristofic said.

With Breezy Johnson, Jacqueline Wiles, Alice McKennis also out injured, that leaves only Laurenne Ross and Alice Merryweather to

represent the U.S. team in Val Gardena.

The Gardena races were originally scheduled for Val d'Isere, France, this weekend but were moved due to a lack of snow in the French resort.

While the U.S. has plenty of starting spots available in Gardena, Kristofic said that the team's younger athletes "are not ready to race World Cup downhill, especially on a men's track."

It's the first time that the Saslong course will host women's World Cup races, having been a classic stop on the men's circuit for a half-century.





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Steelers ride rookie Samuels past Patriots 17-10

By WILL GRAVES

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Rookie running back Jaylen Samuels, making his second start in place of injured James Conner, ran for a careerhigh 142 yards and made a critical third-down reception in the fourth quarter as Pittsburgh snapped a three-game losing streak by holding off the New England 17-10 on Sunday. Ben Roethlisberger threw for 235 yards with two firsthalf touchdowns and two interceptions as the Steelers (8-5-1) remained in front of Baltimore in the AFC North with two weeks to go in the season. Chris Boswell, who has struggled so badly this season the team held open tryouts during the week, atoned for a 32-yard miss in the third quarter by drilling a 48-yarder with 2:30 remaining

Pittsburgh's defense, which let fourth-quarter leads slip away each of the last two games, made it stand. The Patriots (9-5) missed a chance to clinch their 10th straight AFC East title when Tom Brady's pass into the end zone for Julian Edel-



Pittsburgh Steelers running back Jaylen Samuels (38) is tackled by New England Patriots free safety Devin McCourty (32) during the first half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018

Associated Press

man was knocked down by Pittsburgh's Morgan Burnett.

Brady finished 25 of 36 for 279 yards with a touchdown and an interception while losing to the Steelers for the first time since 2011 and just the third time in 14 career meetings. Pittsburgh held

tight end Rob Gronkowski to two receptions for 21 yards. Brady flung a jump ball to Gronkowski deep in Pittsburgh territory midway through the fourth quarter that was picked off by cornerback Joe Haden.

The uncharacteristically sloppy Patriots were flagged 14 times for 106 yards and their problematic run defense couldn't find an answer for Samuels, a fifth-round pick out of North Carolina State who was considered a project when the Steelers took a flyer on him.

Not so much anymore.

Sprinting through gaping holes and showing plenty of burst, Samuels regularly found himself running into the New England secondary. The leading receiver in N.C. State history also made a leaping grab on

third-and-9 on Pittsburgh's penultimate drive that helped set up Boswell's field goal. Both teams came in hurting, taking some of the shine off a rivalry that has been meaningful if onesided. The Patriots lost on a last-second 69-yard double-lateral touchdown to Miami. Pittsburgh somehow fell to the woeful Raiders in Oakland, a third-straight setback that trimmed its once-comfortable in the AFC North to a halfgame over Baltimore. That left coach Mike Tomlin promising the team would not "sit on its hands" in search of answers.

There were tweaks in the secondary, with corner-back Artie Burns reclaiming his starting spot, though they didn't last long. Not after Brady hit a laughably wide-open Hogan for a 63-yard touchdown in the first quarter.

ROAD WOES

Hogan's TD was one of the few big plays created by the Patriots, who again struggled to get much going on the road. New England finished the regular season 3-5 away from Gillette Stadium, not exactly promising for a club that would almost certainly have to travel at least once — and maybe twice — if it wants to return to the Super Bowl.



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Free agent Justin Bour, Angels finalize \$2.5M deal

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — First baseman Justin Bour and the Angels have finalized a \$2.5 million, one-year contract, giving Los Angeles depth while Albert Pujols recovers from surgery.

Bour can earn an additional \$500,000 in performance bonuses based on plate appearances under the deal announced Saturday: \$125,000 each for 350, 400, 450 and 500.

The 30-year-old hit 20 homers and drove in 59 runs with the Marlins and Phillies last season. He played 112 of his 141 games with Miami before an August trade to Philadelphia. Bour didn't

find a regular spot with Philadelphia down the stretch. The Phillies wouldn't have a spot for him this year, either, after moving Rhys Hoskins back to first base and signing corner outfielder Andrew McCutchen to a \$50 million, three-year contract during the winter meetings. Bour batted .227, missing time late with an oblique strain. He's hit 83 home runs over the last four years. He earned \$3.4 million last season after beating Miami in salary arbitration, and then became a free agent last month when Philadelphia didn't offer a 2019 contract.



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Simmons, Embiid lead 76ers past Cavs in Butler's return

By STEVE HERRICK **Associated Press**

CLEVELAND (AP) — Jimmy Butler's return brought out the best in his Philadelphia teammates.

Ben Simmons had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 14 assists for his third triple-double of the season. Joel Embiid scored 24 points and the 76ers routed the Cleveland Cavaliers 128-105 on Sun-

Butler scored 19 points after missing two games — both losses — with a strained groin.

"He's such a large personality and his talent is sort of a spirit he brings to our group," coach Brett Brown said.

Butler was 6 of 10 from the field and hit three 3-pointers. He gave Simmons most of the credit.

"Ben is doing what he always does for us, passing the ball," Butler said. "When he's playing like that, the game is really easy for everybody."

Simmons had his 15th career triple-double.

"Having Jimmy back helped because we had multiple guys that could put it away," he said. "I just do what I can offensively and help find guys who are scoring. Numbers are numbers. Obviously, stat-wise, it looks good."

Landry Shamet added 16 points for Philadelphia, J.J. Redick had 14 points and Wilson Chandler 11.

Cedi Osman and Jordan Clarkson each scored 18 points for Cleveland. Rodney Hood and Matthew Dellavedova each had 13 points, and rookie point guard Collin Sexton added

Philadelphia broke it open

after Cleveland cut a 13-point lead to 86-85 late in the third quarter.

The Sixers led 86-73 midway through the quarter, but Cleveland scored 12 straight points and trailed by one after Larry Nance Jr.'s dunk. Wilson Chandler hit a 3-pointer from the corner as time ran out in the period, starting the deciding run.

"The margin for error in this game is very small for us," Cavaliers coach Larry Drew said. "Margin for errors is not just a turnover, it's a bad shot, it's not getting back defensively."

The Cavaliers led 44-34 early in the second quarter, but Philadelphia ended the first half on a 31-14 run.

Butler was injured in the first quarter Monday against Detroit and went scoreless in 10 minutes. Philadelphia won that game, but lost to Brooklyn and Indiana with Butler out

"I felt good," he said. "When you play with such good guys that draw so much attention, I have the easy job. I hang my hat on defense. I don't care how many shots I get or anything."

TOUGH MATCHUP

Drew knows even trying to slow down Embiid is not an easy task. Not only is the 7-footer a dominant player in the lane, he has also hit 36 3-pointers this season.

"He's a force — size, the ability to shoot it from the three, the ability to take it off the dribble," Drew said. "You don't see a guy that size being able to shoot the ball as well as he does from the three. Where he's most deadly is when he's playing with his back to the basket. Just for his size alone, I don't think anybody can defend him one-on-one down low because he's just too big." **LONG TRIP**

The Sixers complete a challenging back-to-back set in San Antonio on Monday. Simmons was the only player to go more than 30 minutes as Brown made liberal use of his bench. "I'm happy to get on a plane and know nobody played reckless minutes, and we got the win," Brown said.

TIP-INS

76ers: Redick was limping after landing awkwardly while being fouled in the first quarter, but remained in the game and played 28 minutes. ... Brown walked halfway on the floor to call timeout after Osman drove the length of the floor for an uncontested layup in the second quarter.

Cavaliers: Hood picked up two fouls in the first 1:13 and went to the bench. ... Ante Zizic started at center after not playing in four straight games. Zizic and Nance each picked up two fouls in the first quarter trying to



Philadelphia 76ers' Ben Simmons (25), from Australia, shoots against Cleveland Cavaliers' Rodney Hood (1) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

guard Embiid. ... Channing Frye, who started the previous two games in place of

the injured Tristan Thompson, entered the game late in the period.

Loves set scoring records to win Father-Son Challenge

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Davis Love III and his son Dru played so well Sunday that they set two scoring records, rallied from a threeshot deficit to win the PNC Father-Son Challenge and then wondered if they would get to play again.

Team Love shot 27 on the front nine at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club to get in the mix, took the lead with a birdie at No. 11 and finished off their record round with four more birdies an eagle for a 16-under 56, breaking

by one the 18-hole record in a scramble format.

They won by three shots at 26-under 118, another record in the scramble for-

our last time playing, so it was fun to finish it off," Love

The 36-hole event is for players who have won a major or The Players Championship, and their partner cannot hold a PGA Toursanctioned card. Dru Love has played 17 times in the last two years on the PGA Tour, European Tour and Web.com Tour, but he has yet to earn a card and missed out in the qualifying tournament this year.

"Who knows? This might be They were unstoppable in the second and final round, making only four pars and the rest birdies and two eagles.

> The 56 beat by one the record previously held by Raymond and Raymond Floyd Jr. in 1994 and by Bob and David Charles in 1998.



APNewsBreak: Champion Red Sox owe nearly \$12M in luxury tax

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Boston
should be happy to pay
this tax bill.

The World Series champion Red Sox owe \$11,951,091 in luxury tax for having baseball's top payroll, according to final calculations by the commissioner's office obtained by The Associated Press. The only other team that owes is the Washington Nationals, who must pay \$2,386,097, their second straight year with a bill.

Because Boston was more than \$40 million over the tax threshold, it became the first team to incur a new penalty put in place for the 2018 season: the top Red Sox selection in next June's amateur draft will be dropped 10 places. Boston's top pick had been projected to be No. 33 overall before the penalty. Boston has owed tax in the years of three of its four titles this century, paying \$3,148,962 in 2004 and \$6,064,287 in 2007. The Red Sox stayed under the tax threshold when they won in 2013. The only other championship teams to owe since the tax began in 2003 were the 2009 New York Yankees at \$25.7 million and the 2016 Chicago Cubs, at \$2.96 million.

This year's initial tax threshold was \$197 million, counting payrolls by average annual values and including earned bonuses, adjustments for cash transactions



This Oct. 28, 2018, shows Boston Red Sox owner John Henry, partially hidden at left, and chairman Tom Werner holding the championship trophy beside manager Alex Cora, right, after Game 5 of baseball's World Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

and option buyouts and just over \$14 million per team in benefits. Boston's payroll for the tax was \$239.5 million, exceeding the \$237 million threshold that triggered the draft penalty. Washington's was \$205 million.

Boston boosted its payroll during spring training when it added slugger J.D. Martinez, who counted at \$23.75 million on the tax payroll and then earned \$700,000 in bonuses while leading the major leagues with 130 RBIs

Ahead of the July 31 trade deadline, the Red Sox acquired World Series MVP Steve Pearce, who added \$3,208,602 to the payroll, including a \$50,000 Series MVP bonus; pitcher Nathan Eovaldi, who added \$720,430 and became a key component to the title run with a pair of postseason wins and a six-inning relief outing in World Series Game 3 against the Los Angeles Dodgers; and second baseman lan Kinsler, who added \$3,766,666.

San Francisco had the third-highest payroll at \$195.7 million followed by the Dodgers at \$195 million — up from \$182 million on opening day, The Dodgers

had paid tax in each of the previous five seasons, a total of \$149.6 million.

The Cubs were fifth at \$193.3 million, and the Yankees sixth at \$192.98 million—the first time the Yankees finished under the threshold after 15 consecutive years over that resulted in taxes totaling \$341.1 million.

By dropping under the threshold, the Yankees and Dodgers reset their tax rates for 2019 and put themselves in better position to pursue a talented free-agent class that includes Bryce Harper and Manny Machado.

Boston has owed in nine of

16 seasons, a total of \$37.1 million. The Red Sox paid in 2015 and '16, then dropped under the threshold by just over \$3 million in 2017, resetting their tax rates to the lowest level this year. Boston paid at a 28.1 percent effective rate.

Washington is paying for the second straight season, raising its total to \$3.8 million.

Only eight teams have gone over the tax threshold: Detroit paid \$9 million over three seasons, San Francisco \$8.9 million over three seasons and the Los Angeles Angels \$927,000 in 2003. Next year's tax starts at \$206 million, and Boston's rates will rise from 20 percent to 30 percent on the first \$20 million over, 32 percent to 42 percent on the next \$20 million and 62.5 percent to 75 percent on any amount over \$246 million. Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski predicted Boston against will exceed all three thresholds next year. Washington's rate rises to 50 percent on the first \$20 million over, 62 percent on the next \$20 million and 95 percent on any amount over \$246 million. Checks for the competitive balance tax, as it is normally known, go to the commissioner's office and are due by Jan. 21. The first \$13 million of tax money is used to fund player benefits and 50 percent of the remainder will be used to fund player Individual Retirement Accounts.



In this July 9, 2018, file photo, Tampa Bay Rays catcher Wilson Ramos heads for the field during a baseball game against the Detroit Tigers, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Associated Press

Continued from Page 18

Ramos crosses another item of the to-do list of new general manager Brodie Van Wagenen. The former agent made a blockbuster deal with Seattle for second baseman Robinson Cano and closer Edwin Diaz this month and also brought back former New York closer Jeurys Familia on a \$30 million, three-year deal last week. The team may still pursue an upgrade in center field and a left-handed reliever.

Ramos is expected to be New York's primary catcher, with Travis d'Arnaud and Kevin Plawecki as pos-

sible backups. D'Arnaud, who turns 30 in February, has been on the disabled list in five straight seasons as injuries limited him to 366 major league games, an average of 73 per season. He was 3 for 15 (.200) with one homer and three RBIs in four games this year when he felt tightness in his right elbow during pregame drills in Miami. He was sent to New York and had an MRI that revealed a torn ulnar collateral ligament. Mets medical director Dr. David Altchek performed Tommy John surgery on April 17.

Ramos made the AL All-Star

team in 2018 but missed the game with a hamstring issue, and injuries have been a problem for him the past few years. Most notably, he tore his right ACL at the end of a breakout 2016 season with the Washington Nationals, likely costing himself millions of dollars as a free agent that winter. He ended up with Tampa Bay on a two-year, \$12.5 million deal. He was also on the disabled list twice in 2015 — with a broken little finger in his right hand and a strained left elbow — in 2016 with a strained right rotator cuff and in 2017 with a bruised right wrist.



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Alvarez stops Fielding in 3rd round for 3rd division title

By BARRY WILNER **AP Sports Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Canelo Alvarez threw a Garden party Saturday night. A short and powerful fiesta.

Alvarez landed dozens of body punches, knocking down Rocky Fielding four times and stopping him in the third round to earn his third weight class title, taking the WBA super middleweight belt.

Coming off his close decision against Gennady Golovkin three months ago to take the WBA and WBC middleweight titles, Alvarez could hear chants of "Canelo! Canelo!" long before he entered the Madison Square Garden ring for the first time. Throughout a lengthy undercard, it was clear who the sellout crowd of 20,112 came to see and cheer.

He delivered with power and precision, landing 73 punches, 35 to the body.

"That was the plan in the gym, to hit the body and then move up, and that's the result," Alvarez said through an interpreter. "You see the result here."

Only eight other Mexican fighters have held three division titles. And Alvarez, 28, says he is headed back to the 160-pound class he rules, with possibly a third go with Golovkin in 2019. The next fight, opponent unknown, is set for Las Vegas in early May.

"Canelo will fight whoever is the best, no doubt about it," said his promoter, Oscar De La Hoya.

If this was a one-off at 168 pounds, it was quite a show in his debut at Madison Square Garden.

"My goal is to make good fights for the people, for the public, and to make sure the name of Canelo Álvarez and of Mexico is held up high," Alvarez said.

Fielding, 31, won the WBA crown in July when he knocked out Tyron Zeuge in Germany in the fifth round. But the Englishman had never faced anyone close to Canelo's class, and it showed

"I never shied away from the challenge," Fielding said. "I lived the dream, I'll come back.

"He is strong and all that. It was the body shots, the wind he took away. He placed the shots well and he caught me. I stood too long to try to mix it with him when I shouldn't have.

"The better man won tonight."

The fight ended with 22 seconds remaining in the third after two knockdowns in the round.

was outmanned from the outset.

He couldn't block the bevy of body punches launched by Alvarez, who floored Fielding with a left in the first

Alvarez did it again with a right to the head and a left to the body late in the second round, and that On the undercard, Tevin hands enough to expose the head.

So Alvarez used a huge right lead to knock down Fielding in the third round, and soon after finished it with a series of blows.

It really was no contest.

"What I always want to do



England's Rocky Fielding takes a knee after being knocked down by Mexico's Canelo Alvarez, left, during the first round of a WBA super middleweight championship boxing match Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018, in New York. Alvarez stopped Fielding in the third round.

Associated Press

is to make the best fight whether they're for world titles or not," Alvarez said, Fielding came to fight, but then turned his attention to the Garden scene.

> "I'm happy and I'm grateful to be here. I hope this is the first of many."

> fight card streamed on DAZN, a service that paid Alvarez \$365 million for 11 fights. This was quite a selling point for the red-headed Mexican.

brought down Fielding's Farmer started fast, then coasted to a unanimous decision over Francisco Fonseca to hold onto his IBF

super featherweight belt. Farmer lost to Kenichi Ogawa for the IBF title last year, but Ogawa then failed a drug test and the bout was declared a no contest. He

outpointed Billy Dib in August for the belt, then defended by stopping James Tennyson in October.

He won 117-111 on all three judges' cards.

"Nowadays, I really have a lot of anger built up, good anger though," he said, "and I just want to hurt everybody when I'm in the ring. I don't have no sym-

Farmer is 28-4-1, while Fonseca is 22-2-1. Costa Rican Fonseca's other loss came in his only previous title fight, to Gervonta Davis for the same crown in 2017.

Katie Taylor of Ireland won a lopsided 10-round decision over Finland's Eva Wahlstrom to keep her IBF and WBA lightweight championships. She is now

12-0, while Wahlstrom lost for the first time in 24 fights. featherweight Super Lamont Roach Jr. easily outpointed Alberto Mercado, running his record to 18-0-1. Roach controlled the fight from the outset and took it easy late, which nearly cost him when Mercado (15-2-1) nailed him with several hard shots in the final round.

Rising lightweight Ryan Garcia had no trouble running his record to 17-0 with 15 knockouts by stopping Braulio Rodriguez in the fifth round. Rodriguez's repertoire included more clowning and low blows than fighting, and Garcia ended it with a sharp right, followed by a series of head

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Hertz, Clear partner to speed rentals with biometric scans

By DEE-ANN DURBIN **AP Business Writer**

Biometric screening is expanding to the rental car industry.

Hertz said Tuesday it is teaming up with Clear, the maker of biometric screening kiosks found at many airports, in an effort to slash the time it takes to pick up a rental car. Clear hopes it will lead more travelers to its platform, which has 3 million members in the U.S. It's the latest place consumers will find biometric technology, which has migrated over the last 50 years from secure government facilities and banks to airports, stadiums and even smartphones that unlock with the touch a fingerprint. Hertz is the first rental car company to use the technology.

Improvements in cameras and other technology have made it cheaper to install scanners that can read fingerprints, faces, and irises. More than 100 airports worldwide use biometric readers from Clear, Vision-Box and other companies to scan passengers. Walt Disney World verifies visitors' identity by scanning fingerprints.

And the advancements will likely keep coming. Microsoft is working with Australia's national bank on cardless ATM machines that would let people withdraw cash using a facial scan and personal identification number. Universities in London and Copenhagen have on-campus groceries that let students pay with can now be unlocked with a fingerprint scan.

Hertz with Clear launched their biometrics scans this week at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It will be rolled out to 40 more U.S. Hertz locations



In this Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, photo, a rental car driver demonstrates a new biometric scanning machine by placing his finger on the reader at the Hertz facility at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

next year, including John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, San Francisco International Airport and Los Angeles International Airport. Hertz Gold Plus Rewards loyalty program members with access to Clear will be able to bypass the counter, pick up their car and head to the exit gate. There, Clear pods equipped with cameras and touchscreens can read their face or their fingerprints. If they match up with Hertz's reservation data, the gate will open. Hertz will have at least one lane dedicated to Clear members at each location. their finger. Some laptops Hertz President and CEO Kathy Marinello expects Clear to shave 1.5 minutes off what's now a two-minute checkout process.

"In the world of travel, I think time is of the essence," she

The service is free for mem-

bers of the Gold Plus Rewards program, which also has no fee. Travelers can sign up for Clear at a Hertz location. To upgrade to airport service, which promises to move Clear members through security lines more quickly, travelers must pay a monthly fee of \$15.

Clear says it's the first time it will be identifying members based on their face instead of their iris or their fingerprints. Clear CEO Caryn Seidman-Becker says the cameras can take measurements and identify minute differences in facial

Amil Jain, a professor at Michigan State University who researches biometrics, says facial screenings work by comparing an original photo to a new one. That could be tough in a rental car lane, where the lighting may differ substantially and

drivers could be wearing makeup or winter scarves that change their features. "If you don't do the biometrics right, you'll turn off the customer more," he said. But biometric scanning done well could be more robust and secure than having an employee see if a driver's face matches their license, he said.

Jain doesn't think customers need to be particularly worried about facial scans. He points out that millions of people have shared photos of their faces on Facebook and other platforms already.

But Justin Brookman, director of consumer privacy and technology for Consumer Reports, said consumers should think twice before sharing personal identifiers.

"Once your biometric data gets leaked or compromised, you can't really do anything about it," he said. "The more people who potentially have it, the more potential for things to go bad."

Seidman-Becker said Clear will not sell or share the data it collects. She noted that the company has been certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland

But Jeramie Scott, the national security counsel for the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said sharing biometric data is still risky, because there are no federal laws governing the collection, use and retention of biometric data.

"An individual might sign up for one use only to find out that down the road their data is being used in another manner," he said.

Marinello said Clear approached Hertz about the partnership and Hertz agreed to pay for the installation of the Clear pods. Marinello wouldn't say how much Hertz is investing, but said the company expects to recoup that through increased customers and return visits.

Hertz has been eager to adopt new technology and partner with other companies in an effort to prove there is still a future in rental cars despite pressure from ride-hailing companies and self-driving cars. It's a partner with Volvo in an autonomous driving incubator in Israel, for example.

Clear, too, has been trying to boost its membership through partnerships after Seidman-Becker bought it out of bankruptcy in 2010. Delta Air Lines bought a 5 percent stake in the company in 2016 and offers discounted Clear membership rates for its frequent



Christmas tree farmers aim to boost sales via social media

By GILLIAN FLACCUS **Associated Press**

TUALATIN, Ore. (AP) — Rosa Villarreal's three young sons jumped and ran around the field of Christmas trees like jackrabbits, their excitement palpable as they raced from evergreen to evergreen. The boys, ages 2, 4 and 6, were picking out a real tree this year a new tradition their young parents hope will create lasting memories.

"I saw this video where the big tree, the mom decorates it, and the little tree, the kids get to decorate it," she said, as her husband, Jason Jimenez, snapped a photo of their toddler posing with a tiny tree just his size.

Christmas tree farmers across the U.S. worry families like Villarreal's are slowly dwindling. Artificial trees, once crude imitations of an evergreen, are now so realistic that it's hard to tell they are fakes even though many are conveniently pre-strung with lights and can fold up for storage at the push of a button.

Between 75 and 80 percent of Americans who have a Christmas tree now have an artificial one, and the \$1 billion market for fake trees is growing at about 4 percent a year — even though they can be reused again and again.

To combat this trend, Christmas tree farmers have joined forces as the Christmas Tree Promotion Board and are running a social media ad campaign this holiday season to tout the benefits of a real evergreen. The campaign, called "It's Christmas. Keep It Real!," is funded by a 15cent fee that tree farmers pay for each tree they harvest.

It's a modern-day attempt at such famous agricultur-Milk?" and "Beef. It's What's For Dinner."

A series of short movies on Instagram and Facebook follow real families as they hunt for the perfect tree, cut it down and decorate it. The target audience is the "millennial mom" because tree farmers are increasing-



in Burlingame, Calif.

Associated Press

ly worried that young adults starting their own family traditions will opt for an artificial tree, costing farmers a generation of customers, said Marsha Gray, executive director of the Christmas Tree Promotion Board, based in Michigan.

"The target we're talking about right now is millennials: first house, first baby. That's kind of the decisionmaking time," she said, adding that the videos show families cutting their own trees and buying precut trees from lots.

"We realize they may have never done this before. And we need to help them discover it and figure out how to include it in their holiday."

al ad campaigns as "Got It's impossible to know exactly how many real Christmas trees are sold each year because there is no central clearinghouse or agency collecting that information. But the National Christmas Tree Association estimates about 25 million evergreens are harvested each year — and presum-

ably, most of those are sold. Americans buy about 10 million artificial trees each year, said Thomas "Mac" Harman, CEO of Balsam Hill, the leading retailer of artificial Christmas trees. Harman is also the president of the American Christmas Tree Association, which does not disclose its membership but raised \$70,000 in donations in 2016 for its work, which includes touting artificial trees.

Most people buying artificial trees cite convenience, allergens and fire safety, he said.

"We're seeing a trend where consumers want to set their tree up over Thanksgiving weekend and leave it up all the way until after New Year's." That's safer with an artificial tree, Harman said. Denise Shackleton got a real tree each season before switching to an artificial one. On a recent day, she was at an artificial tree outlet store in Burlingame, California, shopping for a new tree for herself and one for her daughter.

"No one got as excited about a real tree as me, but it was just too much work to put the real tree on my car, get it into the house — all of that," she said. "It's totally for convenience."

Harman says Christmas tree farmers are overestimating the threat to their industry from artificial trees.

Many families now have both a real tree and an artificial tree, and small momand-pop tree farms that allow families to cut their own evergreen remain extremely popular, Harman said.

"I think it's the farms in the middle that are really seeing their business shrink because more people are either getting their tree from Home Depot — which is these small farms," he said. "I think a lot of the angst about 'artificial trees are taking over' is coming from these mid-sized farms."

To fourth-generation tree farmer Casey Grogan, that angst is as real as the towering noble and Nordmann

firs he grows at Silver Bells Tree Farm in Silverton, Oregon. Oregon is the nation's No. 1 producer of Christmas trees, yet Grogan says he has watched about half the fellow tree farmers around him go out of business in the past decade.

A seedling takes eight to 10 years to grow to maturity, and it's difficult to predict demand years out, he said. He harvested about half as many trees this year as he did a decade ago, and with every new seedling he plants this season, he knows he's taking a gamble that the demand will still be there in 2028.

"We're an industry that would like to remain here and be around - and if supporting the big farms everybody buys an artificial - or they're going out to tree, we're not going to be here," said Grogan, who is also president of the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association.

> "It may be a little difficult, but not everything is easy," he added of buying a real tree. "It's worth the extra effort."

Mutts





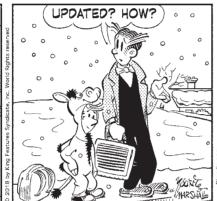


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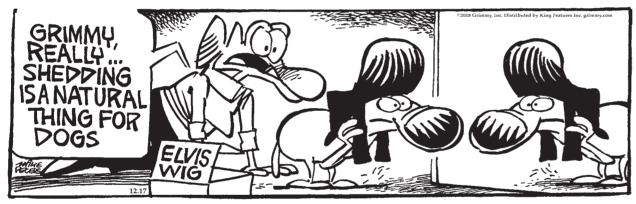
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Mother Goose & Grimm



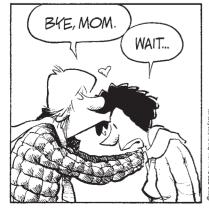
Baby Blues







Zits







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Difficulty Level ★ 12/1								12/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

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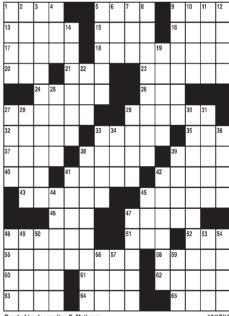
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58 Subsided 60 "Who Wants __ a Millionaire' 61 Defeat decisively 62 Reigned 64 Lively 65 Prescriptions, for short

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Saturday's Puzzle Solved M I N D S C O W S T R O T A W A Y C L O A K R I D E M A T E R E P R I M A N D S A S I S E A S A N G S T O C B A N T A M F O R E S T A S W A N M A O M I T E N L A I R W E L E C C A T E R K I D M E A L S L A T E R
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Not into bingo, 84-year-old Texas woman gets college degree

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

RICHARDSON, Texas (AP)

— After raising five kids and retiring at age 77 from her secretarial job, Janet Fein couldn't be blamed for finally relaxing, but that's not her.

Fein, now 84, went to back to school and will accomplish a long-held goal this week when she graduates from the University of Texas at Dallas with a bachelor's degree.

"I didn't have anything to do in retirement and I didn't think that playing bingo was up to my speed," said Fein, who majored in sociology because she felt it was "substantial."

She said she enjoyed all the reading and writing papers. "With each class I already knew a lot, but then I also learned a lot. And that made me happy," she said. People 65 and older make up less than one percent of U.S. college students. In 2015, they accounted for about 67,000 of about 20 million college students, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

"Keeping oneself active and vital and giving yourself something to look forward to like that is just a really positive move," said Dr. Carmel Dyer, executive director of the UTHealth Consortium on Aging at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Fein took part in a state program that allows people ages 65 and older to take up to six credit hours for free at public universities in Texas. About 2,000 people took advantage of the offer last year, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Fein said she wanted the degree "with all of my heart" and kept going to classes even as she transitioned from living on her own and driving herself around to

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In this Dec. 10, 2018 photo, Janet Fein, 84, poses for a photo in Richardson, Texas.

Associated Press

needing a walker and oxygen and eventually moving to a senior living facility. Then her knees gave out, so she did a semester of independent study and took online classes to fulfill her degree requirements.

"She did not give up in the midst of her challenges ... she just kept plugging along," said Fein's college adviser, Sheila Rollerson.

Tracy Glass, 40, befriended Fein after they both took front-row seats in a class.

"I sat right next to her and over the course of the semester built a fast friendship with her," said Glass, who said Fein's firsthand memories of world events — like the women's movement — enlivened discussions.

Carol Cirulli Lanham, a senior lecturer in sociology,

said, "She would speak up a lot in class and I think that it just made for a more interesting class ... because she literally remembered some of the times we were talking about."

Fein, who grew up in the Bronx in New York City, said that in high school she just wanted to graduate and get a job. After graduating early — at the age of 16 – she went to work as a secretary at a dress manufacturer. She married, spent 18 years staying home with her children and worked several jobs over the decades, including a 20-year stint as a secretary at a Dallas orthopedic hospital — the job she retired from in 2012. She also worked on her associate degree for two decades before earning it in 1995.



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Next-generation of GPS satellites are headed to space

By DAN ELLIOTT **Associated Press**

DENVER (AP) After months of delays, the U.S. Air Force is about to launch the first of a new generation of GPS satellites, designed to be more accurate, secure and versatile.

But some of their most highly touted features will not be fully available until 2022 or later because of problems in a companion program to develop a new ground control system for the satellites, government auditors said.

The satellite is scheduled to lift off Tuesday from Cape Canaveral, Florida, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. It's the first of 32 planned GPS III satellites that will replace older ones now in orbit. Lockheed Martin is building the new satellites outside Denver.

GPS is best-known for its widespread civilian applications, from navigation to time-stamping bank transactions. The Air Force estimates that 4 billion people worldwide use the system. But it was developed by the U.S. military, which still designs, launches and operates the system. The Air Force controls a constellation of 31 GPS satellites from a high-security complex at Schriever Air Force Base outside Colorado Springs.

Compared with their predecessors, GPS III satellites will have a stronger military signal that's harder to jam - an improvement that became more urgent after Norway accused Russia of disrupting GPS signals during a NATO military exercise this fall.

GPS III also will provide a new civilian signal compatible with other countries' navigation satellites, such as the European Union's Galileo system. That means the current satellites.



This March 22, 2016, photo provided by Lockheed Martin shows the first GPS III satellite inside the anechoic test facility at Lockheed Martin's complex south of Denver.

Associated Press

civilian receivers capable of receiving the new signal will have more satellites to lock in on, improving accuracy.

"If your phone is looking for satellites, the more it can see, the more it can know where it is," said Chip Eschenfelder, a Lockheed Martin spokesman.

The new satellites are expected to provide location information that's three times more accurate than

Current civilian GPS receivers are accurate to within 10 to 33 feet (3 to 10 meters), depending on conditions, said Glen Gibbons, the founder and former editor of Inside GNSS, a website and magazine that tracks global navigation satellite systems.

With the new satellites, civilian receivers could be accurate to within 3 to 10 feet (1 to 3 meters) under good conditions, and military receivers could be a little closer, he said.

Only some aspects of the stronger, jamming-resistant military signal will be available until a new and complex ground control system is available, and that is not expected until 2022 or 2023, said Cristina Chaplain, who tracks GPS and other programs for the Government Accountability Office.

Chaplain said the new civilian frequency won't be available at all until the new control system is ready.

The price of the first 10 satellites is estimated at \$577 million each, up about 6 percent from the original 2008 estimate when adjusted for inflation, Chaplain said.

The Air Force said in September it expects the remaining 22 satellites to cost \$7.2 billion, but the GAO estimated the cost at \$12 billion.

The first GPS III satellite was declared ready nearly 2½ For the first time, the Air years behind schedule. The problems included delays in the delivery of key components, retesting of other components and a decision by the Air Force to use a Falcon 9 rocket for the first time for a GPS launch, Chaplain said, That

required extra time to certify the Falcon 9 for a GPS mission.

The new ground control system, called OCX, is in worse shape. OCX, which is being developed by Raytheon, is at least four years behind schedule and is expected to cost \$2.5 billion more than the original \$3.7 billion, Chaplain said.

The Defense Department has struggled with making sure OCX meets cybersecurity standards, she said. A Pentagon review said both the government and Raytheon performed poorly on the program.

Raytheon has overcome the cybersecurity problems, and the program has been on budget and on schedule for more than a year, said Bill Sullivan, a Raytheon vice president in the OCX system.

Sullivan said the company is on track to deliver the system to the Air Force in June 2021, ahead of GAO's estimates.

The Air Force has developed work-arounds so it can launch and use GPS III satellites until OCX is ready to go.

While the first GPS III waits for liftoff in Florida, the second is complete and ready to be transported to Cape Canaveral. It sits in a cavernous "clean room" at a Lockheed Martin complex in the Rocky Mountain foothills south of Denver.

It's expected to launch next summer, although the exact date hasn't been announced, said Jonathon Caldwell, vice president of Lockheed Martin's GPS program.

Six other GPS satellites are under construction in the clean room, which is carefully protected against dust and other foreign particles. "It's the highest-volume production line in space," Caldwell said.

Force is assigning nicknames to the GPS III satellites. The first one is Vespucci, after Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian navigator whose name was adopted by early mapmakers for the continents of the Western Hemisphere.





Half of iconic Bert & I duo dies 60 years after recording

By DAVID SHARP Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Bob Bryan, one half of the comedy duo Bert and I, which had fun at the expense of Maine Yankees and popularized the immortal punchline, "You can't get there from here," has died at his home in Quebec. He was 87.

Bryan and the late Marshall Dodge created their humor in a dormitory room at Yale University, and their 1958 album was the first of several that shaped the state's humor and image.

Uttered in exaggerated Down East accents, the jokes have withstood the test of time, including the one about the tourist who befuddled a Mainer by asking for directions. The native concludes with a famous punchline: "Come to think of it, you can't get there from here."

Bryan, who died Wednesday in Sherbrooke, was a native of Long Island, New York, who picked up the local vernacular during summers spent on a lake near Ellsworth, Maine.

The stories often involved a fancy-pants tourist and a laconic Mainer who gets the last word.

"They didn't write from scratch all of these stories. They adapted them. A lot of them were off color, from lumber camps or fishing wharfs. They'd rewrite them. They took them to the next level," said Dean Lunt from Islandport Press, which sells the "Bert and I" albums.

Humorist and storyteller Garrison Keillor recalled playing cuts of the "Bert and I" albums during his early stints as a morning disc jockey. And the original "Bert and I" album made comedian-magician Penn Jillette's list of the top 12 comedy albums of all time.



In this 1970s photo, Bob Bryan, left, and Marshall Dodge, the Down East Maine humorists behind "Bert and I," pose for a photo in Maine. Bryan died Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018, in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

Associated Press

prankster, an optimist and a larger-than-life character whose charisma attracted people. "He was friends with people from all walks of life. Really, from the bottom to the top, and he believed in them all," she said. Bryan leaves behind a wife, three daughters, a bunch of grandchildren and a great-granddaughter and a heap of stories that have withstood the test of time, said Cherie Hoyt, a friend of Bryan's who produced the "Bert and I ... Rebooted" recording with Bryan and Maine humorist

"You can listen to a good story many times without getting sick of it," Hoyt said. "I know them by heart, but I still find them funny. I still smile. I still chuckle."

Tim Sample.

The pair eventually set off in different directions after selling hundreds of thousands of albums.

Dodge toured the country as a comedian before his death in 1982 in Hawaii, where he was struck by a hit-and-run driver while bicycling.

Bryan, a divinity student who went on to be ordained as an Episcopal priest, used some of his "Bert and I" earnings to buy a float plane. As a bush pilot, he flew his plane to the rugged fishing villages in northern Quebec to minister to local residents.

He created the Quebec-Labrador Foundation with a goal of supporting rural communities and the environment of eastern Canada and New England.

One of Bryan's daughters, Sandy Bryan Weatherall, remembers her dad and Dodge recording stories on a reel-to-reel tape player in her Massachusetts home. And she remembers listening for the sound of his airplane to mark his return home.

She said her dad was a







In 'Beale Street,' a radiant portrait of young black love

By JAKE COYLE

NEW YORK (AP) — Barry Jenkins years ago went on Etsy to have a James Baldwin quote embroidered onto his leather phone case. The line so resonated with the filmmaker that it's also spoken in Spanish by a character in his short film "Chlorophyl." Jenkins no longer has the case but when the Baldwin line is read to him, he quickly takes up the reciting.

"Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does," he quotes. "Love is a battle, love is a war; love is growing up."

That sentiment hovered over the making of Jenkins' latest film, his lyrical, mournful portrait of a young black love torn tragically apart: the Baldwin adaptation "If Beale Street Could Talk ." It was there, too, in the anguished journey of Chiron on Jenkins' best picture-winning "Moonlight," a young man warped by the absence of affection. In both, love is a magical, mystical force molded by the obstacles of a harsh re-

"I did an interview where



This image released by Annapurna Pictures shows Stephan James, left, and Brian Tyree Henry in a scene from "If Beale Street Could Talk."

Associated Press

people were saying you're kind of building this career as a chronicler of black love. And I always hear that in the pejorative because I think people's idea of love is so simple," Jenkins said on a recent November morning. "But if I go back to that quote, yeah, of course, because I'm making these movies emotional

wars, these emotional battles, and the evolution that comes out of that."

In "If Beale Street Could Talk," which opens in limited release Friday, Jenkins sought to capture an experience of love that has seldom been seen on screen, just as it had been seldom inked when Baldwin published his Harlem-set 1974 novel. In bringing "Beale Street" to screen, little was more important than finding the book's central lovers: the humble but resilient 19-year-old Clementine "Tish" Rivers and Alonzo "Fonny" Hunt, the sculptor Tish has known since childhood.

"When I read a book, I don't really see faces," says Jenkins. "The hope was to find two young people who just seemed so young, vibrant, pure, uncorrupted by the world — who had chemistry."

Jenkins cast Fonny first, handing the role to Stephan James, the Toronto-born, up-and-coming 24-year-old who played Jesse Owens in "Race" and John Lewis in "Selma." KiKi Both actors differed, in Fonny is sent to jail. Layne, a 26-year-old theater actress who hadn't before acted in a film, landed Tish after Jenkins flew her to New York for a chemistry read with James.

"There was just an energy about KiKi and it's evident in the film — just a raw, pure energy," James says, sitting next to his co-star. "I realized her willingness to be open and to be giving with me pretty early on. In that chemistry read it was like: I just met you five minutes ago and now we need to touch faces and I'm proposing to you."

They laugh, remembering how immediately "Beale Street" prompted their intimacy with each other. As they launched into shooting the film without the benefit of rehearsal, both actors quickly found they were forging a fictional relationship with broader meaning.

"We don't really see two black people portrayed as soul mates," says Layne. "I know Barry talks about that a lot. These two people are meant to be together from a very, very young age and that is powerful."

"It felt like we were going to be able to do something for the first time, show people a different side of what it means to be black or what it means to be in love," says James.

ways, from Baldwin's descriptions. In the book, each character is labeled as ugly (Fonny's skin is referred to as "like raw, wet potato rinds"), and Tish and Fonny see a beauty in each other that others don't. Yet there's also the impression

that their low opinion of themselves has been distorted by prevailing racist attitudes of appearance.

"The only thing I knew right away is that on screen these two people are so amazingly hot side by side," Jenkins says. "The way Tish remembers the romance in the film is heightened so I thought, 'F--- it, they're gorgeous. Can't do anything about it."

The romance in Jenkins' film is intensely idyllic, often captured in wordless but deeply expressive gazes between Tish and Fonny. But after Fonny is framed for rape — a kind of inescapable consequence of the racist traps set everywhere for black men like Fonny — their scenes are often shared through the glass of a prison's visiting center. For those moments, Jenkins used Errol Morris' "Interrotron" method of shooting, allowing the actors to make eye contact while looking into the camera.

James drew not just on Baldwin's words for Fonny but contemporary corollaries — specifically Kalief Browder, the Bronx man who killed himself after spending 33 months on Rikers Island and almost two years in solitary confinement after being arrested at age 16 for a robbery he insisted he had not committed. "Fonny struck me as somebody whose story was bigger than just Fonny's story," says James. "It felt like something that represented a whole bunch of voiceless young men in this country - African-American, Latino young men who are incarcerated. It just felt like Fonny was Exhibit A, one of so many." Layne, more outgoing and confident than her character, initially felt disconnected from Tish, who leans on her family's support when

'Like vou see in the film everyone comes around Tish, everyone came around me, KiKi, as I was dealing with all these new experiences," says Layne, who has since filmed an adaptation of Richard Wright's "Native Son."





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2018 Breakthrough Entertainer: 'Boo'd Up' singer Ella Mai

By MESFIN FEKADU

NEW YORK (AP) — Singer Ella Mai appreciates how much "Boo'd Up" has changed her life and jumpstarted her music career, but she wants to make one thing clear: "I know how to make songs. I'm not the 'Boo'd Up' girl."

"Being someone who's had an insane year off of one song, it can be a gift and a curse," said 24-year-old Mai. "I felt like almost everyone was kind of like, 'She's a one-hit wonder.' Everyone was waiting for me to fail, honestly. Like, 'Ah, the next song she releases isn't going to be as good."

But Mai, who was born in London and lived in New She followed her debut hit with "Trip," a platinum success currently spending its 10th week on top of Billboard's Hot R&B songs chart. Overall, she's topped the R&B charts for 23 weeks



In this Nov. 19, 2018 photo, singer Ella Mai poses for a portrait in New York. Mai was named as one of eight Breakthrough Entertainers of the Year by the Associated Press.

Associated Press

York from ages 12 to 17, sociated Press' list of Breakproved the haters wrong. through Entertainers of Mai's breakthrough year in-2018 .

> Her self-titled debut album, released in October, has already reached gold status and debuted at No. 5 on the all-genre Billboard 200 albums chart.

this year — and counting. "Releasing the album was Awards and the Ameri-She also landed in The As- me saying, 'I'm an album can Music Awards — all artist," she said.

> cluded an opening slot on tour for Bruno Mars, collaborations with Chris Brown, H.E.R. and Meek Mill, winning two Soul Train Awards and earning nominations at the MTV Video Music

while watching "Boo'd Up" bring R&B back to the pop R&B song for "Boo'd Up." charts. The triple-platinum song spent 13 weeks on top of R&B charts and peaked at No. 5 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

"Being such a huge R&B fan and growing up listening to

R&B, I never imagined that I could be on the forefront or one of the new faces of a genre that I love so much," she said. "I think back to me being a little girl and looking up to Lauryn Hill and looking up to Alicia Keys — not saying I'm Lauryn Hill or Alicia Keys — but there's a new generation that will look up to us."

"Me, Kehlani, H.E.R., Jhene Aiko, SZA — there's a lot of us strong females trying to bring it back," she added. As each day goes by, Mai continues to notch one more thing off her list of goals. Winning a Grammy could be next: She's nominated for one of the show's biggest awards — song of the year — as well as best

"I would love to win a Grammy. Not that it's the be-all, or end-all, but I think the recognition, that's the highest form of recognition we can get as artists," she said.

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